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September 20, 2001

Carol Hanlon  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management  
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office  
P.O. Box 30307, Mail Stop 025  
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

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SEP 21 2001

Subject: Possible Site Recommendation for Yucca Mountain and Comments on Yucca Mountain Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation (PSSL) (DOE/RW-0540)

Dear Ms. Hanlon:

I have closely followed and provided comment on previous documents concerning the disposition of surplus weapons-grade materials, including Highly Enriched Uranium and Plutonium. The Records of Decision for both of these included conversion and fabrication into reactor fuel with subsequent disposition as spent nuclear fuel (SNF). The importance of a life-cycle waste solution to the overall health of the nuclear industry is of utmost importance. A healthy nuclear industry can contribute to the nation's energy supply and to environmental efforts to reduce the nation's carbon dioxide emissions, lessening the impact of global warming.

After review of the PSSL, **I firmly believe that the Secretary should proceed to recommend the site to the President.** I do not know the best timing for this. Although the Presidents' Energy Policy requires a healthy nuclear industry, which in turn requires the Yucca Mt. Repository, politics, opposition in Nevada and other pressing national issues may indicate some delay. I do not know if the hearings scheduled for 9/12 and 9/13 were held; if not, an extension of the public comment period beyond 9/20/01 is recommended.

I do have a concern about the PSSL. The proposed compliance period is only 10,000 years; this is consistent with proposed NRC regulations and is a reasonable basis to proceed with development. However, since the radiation levels will be much higher at later times (see Figures 3-3, 4, 5 and 7 in the PSSL), additional analysis may be needed prior to a closure decision. The scientific process should be continued to reduce uncertainties for the period beyond 10,000 years.

Please include me on the distribution list for future Yucca Mt. decisions and documents, including the Final EIS and the Record of Decision.

Sincerely,

*Barbara A. Walton*

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